

VZCZCXRO2478
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2308 2391417
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 271417Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0076

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002308

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2019

TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: PRT DIYALA: ELECTION OFFICIAL POINTS TO FRICTIONS
WITH IHEC

Classified By: Diyala Team Leader George White for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The head of Diyala,s Governorate Elections Office (GEO), Mr. Amer Latif Mujiid, asserted that voter registration preparations for the upcoming January 2010 national elections in Iraq are proceeding as planned in Diyala; however, questionable security plans and his ongoing distrust for and clashes with his senior management at the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) in Baghdad could lead to disruptions. Despite these concerns, he continues to stress that he has the necessary staffing and logistical support to implement the voter registration process smoothly. End Summary.

SUNNI GEO LEADER RETAINS POSITION

¶2. (C) In a series of recent meetings in Diyala, PRToffs have heard complaints about IHEC from Amer Latif Mujiid, who has served as the head of the Diyala GEO since 2005. Mr. Mujiid, a Sunni, faced controversy after the January 2009 provincial council elections, and received what he considered to be a biased letter of reprimand from IHEC, when the major Shi,a parties blamed their poor showing at the polls on fraudulent elections (reftel). He said, however, that while IHEC wanted him to be a scapegoat, they needed his expertise and had no choice but to keep him on board for the upcoming national elections. He also mentioned that IHEC did fire several of his staff members in Khanaquin for voting irregularities during the provincial elections -- actions that he unsuccessfully attempted to appeal last April.

VOTER REGISTRATION PREPARATIONS IN DIYALA

¶3. (C) The GEO also reviewed with PRToffs the preparations that took place in advance of voter registration in Diyala. (Note: The Voter Registration Update began nationwide on August 22.) In general, he said that the preparations had been adequate and that he had received adequate support from IHEC in Baghdad to hire necessary staff and equipment. Mujiid reported that he had 41 workers on staff, up from 24 for the provincial elections.

¶4. (C) In addition to voter registration preparation, the GEO is working on training and initial voter education outreach efforts. He said he was overseeing training updates for five GEO directors located in Baqubah, Khanaquin, Muqdadia, Khalis, and Kana,an. The GEO and these five directors provided an interview to the local Iraqi cable station, Digila, on voter registration procedures and said he encouraged other channels to also carry the interview. The GEO also stated that he signed a contract for voter registration posters to be created and placed in governance centers around the province.

COMMENT

15. (C) Mr. Mujiid demonstrated very good technical and organizational capacity during the provincial elections, and his skill set likely helped him maintain his position. Having managed two province-wide elections, he reportedly has more experience than many other GEO managers in Iraq. Nevertheless, friction with central IHEC officials could undermine his ability to commandeer the necessary resources for smooth elections in Diyala. For the moment, he is getting the job done in Diyala. End Comment.
HILL